Nicholas Stargardt, *The German Idea of Militarism. Radical and Socialist Critics 1866–1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0521 46692X; 1994; xiv + 232 pp.; £16.95.

New cultural, postmodernist and historians of everyday-life historians have in the past accused German social historians of writing a kind of structural history which at its worst treats men like mice by reducing everything to processes and structures while ignoring the dimension of human influence and action. Nicholas Stargardt (somewhat unsurprisingly, as a pupil of Gareth Stedman Jones) pays tribute to this critique. He attacks the Bielefeld school of social historians for one-sidedly concentrating on authoritarian state structures while ignoring the debates within a complex and pluralist civil society emerging in Imperial Germany. However, concentrating on ideas and debates prominent in civil society and ignoring structures and processes has its own shortcomings, as this study at times demonstrates. Especially in chapters three and four, Stargardt comes perilously close to good old *Geistesgeschichte* à la Friedrich Meinecke — a kind of historiography that knows little of the social and political developments which shaped and influenced both the ideas and the strategies of political actors, but instead chooses to indulge in debates on ideas whose relevance for the lived existence of ordinary human beings cannot be put to the test. Rather than return to an older form of intellectual history, the major task of a future generation of historians surely must lie in linking the analysis of structures and processes to the exploration of the ideas which helped to construct social identities.

As Stargardt himself so poignantly writes in his introduction, 'militarism is not only about institutions and power. It is also about culture and ideas' (5). It is indeed necessary to analyse institutions and ideas *together* and yet his book largely restricts itself to discussing the changing motifs of militarism in Imperial Germany. However, within that limited remit, he succeeds well in illuminating the relation between intellectual ideas (militarism) and political strategies (those of the SPD). He traces the profound change in the meaning of the term militarism around the turn of the century through an analysis of Social Democratic thinking, while at the same time he discusses its repercussions in view of the Social Democratic support for the German war effort in 1914.

Stargardt starts off by showing that an anti-militarist tradition formed around the issues of democracy, tax reform and national defence from the 1860s onwards. Initially criticism of the Prussian army was widespread amongst liberals, Catholics and labour, but by the 1880s only the SPD was sticking to its criticism. The discourse on militarism became almost an exclusively social democratic one. From this, one does not necessarily have to jump to Stargardt's conclusion about Wilhelmine

party politics being constructed around the sole aim of isolating the SPD. A closer look at the structures of Wilhelmine politics would reveal much positive integration of Social Democrats — one only has to think of the approximately 100,000 Social Democratic representatives sitting on administrative and representative bodies such as industrial and commercial courts, and agencies for industrial insurance and certificate of employment agencies.

In its early period of anti-militarism the SPD held up the model of the Swiss militia as militarily more effective, financially less wasteful and politically more democratic than the German armed forces. Militarism was primarily a domestic problem. Stargardt shows that most Social Democratic leaders remained committed to the defence of the nation which, following Fichte, they believed to be superior to other, notably Slav, nations. In his insistence on the non-political, cultural and potentially racist nationalism of the Social Democrats, Stargardt finds himself at odds with the results of the recent major study by Dieter Groh and Peter Brandt on the relationship between the SPD and the nation-state (*'Vaterlandslose Gesellen'. Sozialdemokratie und Nation 1860–1990*, [Munich, 1992]). Brandt and Groh insist on a genuine social democratic patriotism which took its cue from *Vormärz* radicalism and was different from and opposed to the right-wing ethnic nationalism so dominant in Wilhelmine Germany. Sadly, Brandt and Groh did not even make it into Stargardt's otherwise extensive bibliography. Here the opportunity for an interesting debate was missed.

Stargardt finds little in the influential writings of Karl Kautsky to suggest that militarism was of central importance to Kautsky's Marxism. It was only Karl Liebknecht's re-thinking of the meaning of militarism around the turn of the century that put the fight against militarism centre-stage for Social Democratic strategy for some time. The discovery, via the Krupp scandal of 1912–13, of the 'military–industrial complex' and of the increasing militarization of civil society, meant that these were now perceived as a real threat to world peace. As a result, the SPD adopted pacificist positions before the First World War, campaigning vigorously for disarmament. (It is a pity that Stargardt does not adopt the useful distinction of Martin Ceadel between 'pacifism' as the principled rejection of all military conflict and 'pacific*i*sm' as the rejection of military conflict in specific circumstances. Rather confusingly, he even uses both terms interchangeably (128).) Anti-militarism was not any longer of purely domestic significance; it now demanded international action to preserve peace. Thus, Stargardt argues, Liebknecht's neo-Kantian, 'post-Marxist' (106) ideas on militarism sought to re-radicalize the party into action after Kautskyite Marxism had resulted in the impasse of 'revolutionary attentism' (Dieter Groh). And yet, Social Democratic pacificism always continued to have its Achilles' heel in its

continued Russophobia and ill-defined commitment to national defence. For Stargardt, it was ultimately the tension between anti-militarism and ethnic nationalism which was responsible for the decision of 4 August. This conclusion is convincing to a point, and yet there were other (institutional) factors at work which cannot be grasped by concentrating on ideas only. One of the most important was the decision of the trade unions on 2 August to sign an industrial truce with employers and the state for the duration of the war. The unions thus almost forced the SPD to make its own *Burgfrieden*.

Within its conceptual limits and despite one or two criticisms mentioned above, Stargardt has succeeded in writing a fascinating and important book — not only for the specialist on German labour and German militarism, but also for anyone interested in the discourse of anti-militarism. As he rightly points out, the modern images of militarism were all in place before 1914, and they still form the basis of any anti-militarist critique today. Stargardt's argumentative and essayistic style of writing is both clear and refreshing, making his book a very pleasant read. It also provides a whole range of interesting perspectives on old debates about Social Democratic theory before 1914. The availability of a cheap paperback edition is accordingly especially welcome.

Stefan Berger
University of Wales, Cardiff

Günther Schulz, *Wiederaufbau in Deutschland. Die Wohnungsbaupolitik in den Westzonen und der Bundesrepublik von 1945 bis 1957*, Düsseldorf, Droste, ISBN 37700 09754, 1994.
Jeffry M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn and Hermann-Josef Rupieper, eds, *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945–1955*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0–521–431204; 1993. £45.00.

Germany's rapid rise to prosperity from the ashes and ruins of 1945 continues to excite the imagination of a wider public. That it also stimulates outstanding historical research is demonstrated by these two volumes. Günther Schulz's study is concerned with the 'bricks and mortar' of German reconstruction, or, to be precise, one aspect of it: the politics of rebuilding Germany's bombed cities. While critical studies abound on the architectural value of much of the building that went on after 1945, Schulz strikes a deservedly apologetic note: the task faced by policy-makers, civic authorities and, to a limited extent, the Allied forces, was daunting indeed. Schulz estimates that in 1950 West Germany was short